THE BRIGADE COMBAT TEAM – STABILITY AND SECURITY FORCE ASSISTANCE OPERATIONS

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ABSTRACT

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The Army deployed its first Brigade Combat Team - Stability (BCT-S), formerly known as Advise and Assist Brigades, to Iraq in April, 2009. Since then, additional brigades have deployed to both Iraq and Afghanistan. These brigades are based on the Army's modular Brigade Combat Team (BCT) and are designed to partner with host nation conventional forces in order to increase their rate of development and enhance their effectiveness. This essay explores the functionality of the BCT-S for Security Force Assistance (SFA) operations by discussing the organization and mission of the BCT-S and identifying its individual and collective pre-deployment training requirements, noting shortfalls, and providing recommendations on how the Army can better prepare these formations for this increasingly relevant mission. Additionally, the ongoing debate over establishing a permanent force for SFA is summarized and discussed.

THE BRIGADE COMBAT TEAM - STABILITY AND SECURITY FORCE ASSISTANCE OPERATIONS

> Security Force Assistance is not new for Army forces. In fact, General George Washington's Inspector General of the Army acted as an advisor for Army Forces. Baron Fredrick Wilhelm von Steuben instilled discipline and professionalism into an army that previously lacked formalized training. His 1779 Regulations for the Order and Discipline of the Troops of the United States, adapted from the Prussian Army, formed the doctrinal backbone of the Continental Army throughout the Revolutionary War.
>
> —FM 3-07.1, Security Force Assistance, May 2009

As the United States reduces its military footprint in Iraq and the target date of no combat troops in Iraq by 31 August 2010 draws closer, the United States Army is shifting its focus from combat operations to training and enabling Iraqi Security Forces.[1] The remaining 35,000 to 50,000 troops in Iraq following 31 August 2010 will be known as the Transition Force, primarily tasked to conduct security force assistance (SFA) operations. At the center of this Transition Force is the Brigade Combat Team – Stability (BCT-S), also commonly known as the Advise and Assist Brigade. These units are built upon the modular brigade combat team (BCT) and are designed to operate at the tactical level across the spectrum of conflict. The mission of these new formations is to train, equip, and advise professional security forces; to conduct coordinated counterterrorism missions; and protect the ongoing civilian efforts within Iraq.[2] The BCT-S is not a new formation, but a variant of the standard brigade combat teams which include the infantry, heavy, and Stryker formations. The BCT-S is augmented with additional forces including engineers, military police, and civil affairs personnel to enable it to better focus on stability operations.[3] This augmentation is tailored for the mission and area each brigade is assigned. The Army is fully engaged in organizing,

training and deploying these formations with eight BCT-S currently scheduled to support Operation Iraqi Freedom as U.S. combat operations in Iraq decrease. LTG Charles Jacoby Jr. recently stated "we think it's the right way to go as we move from counterinsurgency and full spectrum operations to our strategy of being done with combat operations for U.S. forces in August 2010."[4]

There has been much debate spurred by the creation of this new role for the modular brigade. Critics have expressed concern that the security force assistance mission is now a sustained requirement and too important to task the brigade combat team to execute as a secondary undertaking.   These same critics advocate for permanent advisory formations which can focus their training and education on the necessary stability and security force assistance tasks and principles to properly partner and advise and assist host-nation security forces.   This paper will address this debate by researching the initial data from the first BCT-S units identified to deploy in support of the changing mission Iraq. The paper will first examine the new concept of the Brigade Combat Team – Stability by briefly discussing security force assistance and the recent history leading to this new concept. It will also describe the major components, functions, and responsibilities of the BCT-S and explore the pre-deployment training currently being conducted for this relatively new mission. Additionally, the challenges facing the BCT-S formations while preparing to deploy will be discussed as well as the initial lessons learned which can be used to assist subsequent BCT-S units as they prepare for their upcoming missions. Finally, both perspectives of the debate over the utility of the BCT-S will be discussed in the context of the latest data found during the research of this paper.

<u>Background</u>

       The concept of the BCT-S marks a major shift in how the United States Army approaches security force assistance. FM 3-07.1, *Security Force Assistance*, defines security force assistance as the unified action to generate, employ, and sustain local, host-nation, or regional security forces in support of a legitimate authority.[5] Historically, training and assistance of foreign military forces has been a centerpiece of the Army Special Operations Forces mission and a key task of their Foreign Internal Defense (FID) campaigns. Operations Iraqi and Enduring Freedom highlighted the need for large-scale training and assistance to Iraqi and Afghan conventional forces. The Army's initial response to this requirement was the Military Transition Team (MiTT). Military Transition Teams – referred to as Embedded Transition Teams in Afghanistan - are typically organized around a field grade officer team leader and a varying number of functional specialists ranging in size from 11 to 16 personnel. These teams are generally partnered with Iraqi or Afghani forces at the division, brigade, and battalion levels.   The primary mission of transition teams is to advise in the areas of intelligence, communications, fire support, logistics, and infantry tactics while also coordinating for U.S. enabler support such as air and ground fire support, ISR, and communications.[6]

       The BCT-S was born out of the challenges of fielding and facing Transition Teams, efforts of various company, battalion, and Brigade level units which have partnered with Iraqi and Afghani security forces during the past few years, and the changing situation on the ground, especially in Iraq. MiTTs suffered from not being an organic part of the brigade whose area of responsibility it worked in. BCTs conducting counterinsurgency operations (COIN) were responsible for the area in which the transition teams operated within. As BG Yarbrough, Commanding General, the Joint

Readiness Training Center and former commander of the Iraqi Assistance Group recently stated in regard to MiTT unity of effort and unity of command issues, "They were operating side by side; the brigade had ownership and had attachment of those teams, but they were still not within the brigade. They were a different entity, trained differently, not assigned to the brigade. They met on the battlefield."[7] These ad hoc relationships led to difficulties in coordination and goal identification and achievement. Issues such as these resulted in months of planning and discussion focusing on how to best organize and equip forces to carry out security force assistance missions, while still remaining prepared for the full spectrum of threats.[8] Under the new BCT-S concept, the brigade has become the transition team.

Directing BCTs to morph both organizationally and conceptually to focus on partnered security forces is a logical progression for the modular force as the environment and mission in Iraq have changed. Simply put, the modular force is a group of formations which can be tailored to meet the needs of the combatant commander.[9] As the Vice Chief of Staff of the Army, GEN Peter Chiarelli stated, "the BCT-(S) is a natural evolution of modularity, the changing nature of the fights in Afghanistan and Iraq, and the need to balance risk not only in the Army but to the nation."[10] Many valuable lessons leading to the concept of the BCT-S were learned, especially in regard to unit to unit relationship building techniques at the brigade and battalion level, from units which partnered heavily with Iraqi Security Forces beginning in late 2006 and early 2007.[11] These lessons have been incorporated into tactics, techniques, and procedures that are currently utilized by the BCT-S as they prepare for

and conduct operations with their supported Iraqi Security Forces. As BG James

Yarbrough stated in September, 2009:

> With the evolution of the mission set in Iraq, driving toward security force
> assistance as the primary mission, and by the change of the scope of the
> mission to no longer do combat operations in Iraq, it makes absolute
> sense to embed these transition teams within the brigade, assigned within
> the brigade. The beauty of this is that it allows the brigade commander to
> build his teams with those additional senior ranking officers and task-
> organize to meet the mission on the ground. He will be organized from
> the lowest rifle platoon all the way through the brigade headquarters as he
> embeds himself with his host-nation counterparts. Before, we did
> business with only the advisory teams being embedded with the host-
> nation counterparts.[12]

Organization

The BCT is the cornerstone for Army modularity and can be augmented, based

on requirements of the operational environment, with enabling assets and capabilities to

support distributed security force assistance.[13] The variant BCT-S is augmented with

additional low-density forces as its mission and area of responsibility requires. Typical

forces added to a BCT transitioning to a BCT-S are civil affairs, engineer, military police,

and transportation personnel. The number and type of these low-density personnel

augmentations is based on the operational environment and mission of the BCT-S.[14]

For example, a BCT-S given the mission to train, advise, and assist a significant

number of police and border security units forces could receive more military police to

augment its formation than a BCT-S with mostly army forces in its area of operations.

With these augmentees, the BCT-S is enhanced for security force assistance across the

spectrum of conflict, in both permissive and non-permissive environments supporting

civilian and military joint and multi-national actors.[15] While envisioned to operate in a

permissive environment and not intentioned to conduct offensive and defensive

operations as its primary mission, the BCT-S can rapidly shift its emphasis to more

lethal operations if necessary. As the then-commander of the Combined Armed Center at Fort Leavenworth, LTG William Caldwell, stated in March 2009 in regard to the BCT-S, "their mission is to not go over and conduct destructive-type operations, but rather advise and assist the police and military forces in Iraq and Afghanistan…..while retaining that inherent flexibility to perform other missions."[16]

A hallmark of the augmentation to the BCT-S is the increased number of field grade officers. These field grade officers are typically paired and lead the Stability-Transition Team (S-TT) comprised of up to five functional area specialists and twelve drivers/security personnel.[17]   The functional area specialists typically include fire support, logistic, communication, and civil affairs personnel.   Depending on the mission and area the BCT-S is operating, these teams partner and advise at the battalion, brigade, and division level. The type and level of proficiency of the host-nation security force the S-TT is partnered with dictates the functions of the S-TT. Standard functions of the S-TT include:

1. Advising, training, and assisting the Foreign Security Force (FSF) to which it is assigned.

2. Increasing capability, capacity, competency, confidence, and commitment of the FSF by providing advice and support during battalion level and higher operations.

3. Assessing partner leaders, staff, and certain shortfalls.

4. Conducting sustainment training with FSF at their home-station or on operations.

5. Reporting on conditions in the operational environment.[18]

Like the BCT-S, all S-TTs will not look the same. An S-TT assigned to partner with a border police brigade may be manned with functional specialists differently than an S-TT partnered with an Iraqi Army or Federal Police brigade. Also, the number of S-TTs within a BCT-S is dependent upon the number, size, and type of security forces within its area of responsibility. If the foreign security forces within a BCT-S's area of responsibility are too numerous to provide S-TTs at all host-nation headquarters elements, the brigade commander in consultation with his higher commander, may only provide S-TTs to the higher echelons of the partnered security forces . [19] For example, a BCT-S assigned to an area containing multiple division level foreign security forces commands may provide S-TTs to the brigade and division levels only, unable to provide coverage at the battalion level.   Additionally, the BCT-S may employ the S-TT's in an ad hoc role where an S-TT may have responsibility to advise, train, and assist two or more foreign security force units based on the analysis of the mission by the brigade commander and his staff.

An important relationship for the BCT-S is with their embedded Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT). While the BCT-S has the lead for establishing civil security, establishing civil control (when approved by congress), and developing and enabling foreign security forces, the embedded Provincial Reconstruction Team is the lead element for support to economic and infrastructure development, restoring essential services, and support to governance.[20] The relationship between the BCT-S and the Provincial Reconstruction Team results in the BCT-S commander's ability to address all five stability tasks and the corresponding lines of effort.   The commander

must train his organization and leverage augmented personnel, especially specialties such as civil affairs personnel, to maximize the partnership with the PRT.

BCT-S Premission Training

There has been much discussion and debate surrounding the premission training balance of a BCT preparing to transition for BCT-S operations. With a finite amount of training time available between deployments, brigade commanders are confronted with the challenge of how to conduct individual, collective, and leader training on both combat and stability tasks. Criticism charging that BCTs identified for the security force assistance mission conduct too much stability task training and risk losing competency of its perishable combat skills has remained consistent since its inception. Conversely, there is concern that a brigade may focus too much of its available premission training time on war-fighting tasks while neglecting training on the comparatively less-familiar stability tasks required for successful security force assistance operations. As this paper shall illustrate, the initial BCT-S formations to deploy in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom have remained conscious of this dilemma and have worked to achieve balance in their premission training.

Initial premission training for the first set of BCT-S formations deploying to Iraq has focused on the core war fighting tasks of the BCT.   In keeping with the Vice Chief of Staff of the Army's guidance that "the brigade combat team specifically oriented on an advisory and assistance mission will continue to retain its inherent capability to conduct offensive and defensive operations and, if necessary, to rapidly shift the bulk of its operational focus to combat operations,"[21] the initial BCT-S units have emphasized their combat mission essential tasks prior to engaging heavily in training individual and collective stability tasks. Reflecting on his premission training, the Commander of the

4th Brigade Combat Team – Stability, 1st Armored Division, COL Peter Newell recalled "we absolutely trained and certified on what I call our core war-fighting skills before we made the significant transition to supporting, advise and assist operations."[22]

The trend to date during the stability portion of training for the BCT-S has been typically focused on the advisor. This training emphasizes the host nation culture and language and provides tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTPs) for developing good rapport with host nation personnel.[23] Identification of particular collective and individual tasks is not only based on doctrine, but from experience from previous deployments working with host nation forces and from lessons learned from units which have emphasized partnership during their rotations. For example, significant input for premission training for deploying BCT-S units has come from 4th Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division (4/1 CAV). 4/1 CAV, redeployed from Iraq earlier this year, transitioned from combat operations to an advise and assist role during their deployment. Most of the 4/1 CAV proposals for BCT-S premission training highlight relationship building and sustainment, partnership TTPs, and education on Iraqi security forces and ministry workings. Specific recommendations include: cultural awareness and scenario-based engagement training; embedding and training with local police focusing on evidence collection; education on the Iraqi security and governmental bureaucracy including the Iraqi security forces logistics system and the Iraqi interagency including the Ministry of Defense, Ministry of Interior, and others; and understanding the Status of forces Agreement (SOFA) focusing on rules for coalition forces' searches of property and detention procedures.[24] These recommendations for premission training have been

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shared with other brigades which have recently deployed or are preparing to deploy in the security force assistance role.

The first brigade to deploy with the BCT-S designation is 4th Brigade, 1st Armored Division (4/1 AR) stationed at Fort Bliss, TX. After identifying two lines of effort along which to focus the brigade's training, Enable Governance and Civil Capacity and Assist and Enable the ISF, 4/1 AR placed emphasis on security force assistance related tasks.[25] This training also followed intense training on core competency tasks. 4/1 AR's security force assistance task training can be described as diverse, imaginative, and tailored to its projected mission and area of responsibility.   Faced with partnering with multiple types of Iraqi Security Forces such as Federal Police, the Iraqi Army, and Border Police, 4/1 AR addressed each task with tailored training, and in some cases, utilizing atypical training resources and methods, especially for a brigade combat team.

For example, 4/1 AR personnel projected to partner with border police units spent one week during their permission training with the U.S. Border Patrol at El Paso, TX, focusing on understanding the dynamics of border control including port of entry operations, tactical tracking, and sensitive site and document exploitation .[26] This training incorporated embedding with U.S. Border Patrol personnel. Brigade members projected to work closely with Iraqi police forces spent a week training with military police trainers from Fort Leonard Wood, MO. This training included the role of police in a counter insurgency, an Iraqi government and security forces overview, and the organization, structure, equipment, and capabilities and limitations of an Iraqi police station.[27] The 93rd Civil Affairs Detachment from Fort Bragg, NC, provided three weeks of home station instruction on civil affairs.   This training focused on basic civil affairs

concepts such as SWEAT assessments and an introduction to Provincial Reconstruction Team operations.[28] 4/1 AR soldiers receiving this training were identified to augment and work closely with Civil Affairs and Provincial Reconstruction Team personnel. Intensive language training was provided to 250 brigade soldiers during three separate iterations.[29] This training also included additional cultural awareness and customs and courtesies for those projected to work closest with Iraqi personnel. 4/1 AR also created training time to address leadership stability tasks. Selected key leaders were provided the opportunity to attend the U.S. Department of State (DOS) Foreign Service Institute's PRT Course – the same program attended by DOS personnel who are designated for Provincial Reconstruction Team duty.[30] Additionally, leaders attended Leader Development and Education for Sustained Peace (LDESP) presented by leaders in the field of academia, clergy, NGOs, and retired U.S. and Iraqi General Officers.[31] LDESP training focused on the tenets of the Iraqi insurgency, Iraqi culture and Islam, media relations in counterinsurgency operations, agricultural development in southern Iraq, international law and the strategic goals of Iraq's neighbors. Premission training, very similar to what 4/1 AR conducted prior to their May 2009 deployment, is conducted by other BCT-S designated units preparing to deploy to Iraq. As 4/1 AR before it, brigades are similarly tailoring and coordinating for premission training which reflects the environment, mission and type of Iraqi security forces they will partner with during their OIF deployment.

Another significant segment of BCT-S premission training highlights the Stability-Transition Teams. This training is primarily developed and conducted by the 162nd Infantry Brigade stationed at the Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk, LA.

This training targets predominantly the field grade officers and functional specialists of the S-TTs.   It is conducted in four blocks encompassing 29 training days both prior to and following the Mission Readiness Exercise (MRX).   Block A, conducted before the brigade's MRX, is a 10-day Advisor Academy focusing on core advising skills.[32] Block B, also conducted prior to the MRX, includes 14 days of individual and collective mandatory task training.[33]   The last two blocks, C and D, are executed following the MRX and focuses on both the S-TT and the brigade leadership.[34] During block C, three days are spent training S-TT personnel on how to advise host nation security forces by leveraging the BCT-S's war fighting functions.   During the last block of instruction, brigade leaders receive instruction on partnership best practices. S-TT premission training can be conducted at a brigade's home station, at Fort Polk, or a combination of both. The program of instruction can also be tailored by the 162nd Infantry Brigade in conjunction with the desire and guidance of the BCT-S commander.

All BCT-S units conduct Mission Readiness Exercises (MRE) as their capstone training event at both the National Training Center and the Joint Readiness Training Center prior to deployment. These training rotations are not the typical counterinsurgency-based exercises that have been conducted over the past few years by the combat training centers. These MREs are tailored, with heavy emphasis on security force assistance training, in an effort to condition brigade personnel and systems to support host-nation security forces rather than leading tactical efforts. Resources are provided to create realistic scenarios which, as the commander of the NTC's Operations Group, COL Ted Martin explained, force these brigades to "apply new skills to the Iraq mission" and "not only do they have to do their own survival

mission to prevail on the battlefield, but they have to do it by, with, and through the Iraqis, with the Iraqis in the lead."[35]   During the security force assistance rotations, both the NTC and JRTC Observer/Controllers are augmented with 162nd Infantry Brigade personnel who focus on the S-TTs during the training. While still providing world class realistic training environments, the combat training centers (CTC) have focused their efforts on replicating host-nation security forces for units to partner and train advise and assist tasks. Foremost of these efforts is the combat training centers' efforts to provide a realistic and engaging host-nation security force allowing BCT-S personnel to train on integrating with and operating by, with, and through their counterparts.

A good example of how the CTC's have morphed to provide the BCT-S realistic, relevant, and challenging permission training is 1st Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division's recent National Training Center MRE. The "Raider" Brigade was part of the initial U.S. Invasion into Iraq and returned for two more deployments in 2005 and 2007 and is now tasked to return to Iraq to provide security force assistance. During their October 2009 rotation, the Iraqis – portrayed by the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment, NTC's permanent opposing force – took the lead in planning and executing every operation. These operations included two out of sector operations, one at battalion level and one at brigade level, where the Iraqi security forces led the planning, with concept development support from the U.S. stability transition teams.[36] While the stability transition teams were working with the replicated Iraqi force, sharpening their partnering tasks, 3rd brigade participated in a supporting role, providing the replicated Iraqi forces attack aviation, artillery, intelligence and other enabling capabilities as required, while mentoring and coordinating over the shoulder of their counterparts.   As the brigade

commander, COL Roger Cloutier explained following his unit's capstone exercise, "this rotation was less about 1st Brigade, 3rd ID going out and doing combat missions, and more about us advising and assisting our Iraqi partners in doing that."[37]

Initial BCT-S Challenges and Recommended Solutions

It is clear that the first brigade combat teams to train for and deploy with the BCT-S designation have done so while managing challenges and developing new procedures, especially during premission training. Due to the institutional and deployable Army not developing a comprehensive strategic or operational training plan, menu, or syllabus to guide a BCT in premission training, brigade commanders have been forced to innovate and develop their own. Units have employed imagination and initiative while demonstrating flexibility to overcome these challenges and smooth training and deployment processes for subsequent brigades. An initial challenge for brigades deploying to conduct security force assistance was the identification of individual and collective tasks, methods, and resources to train their formations. First, the directives typically outlining training for deploying units such as FORSCOM's Southwest Asia Training guidance, have not been updated to address the security force assistance tasks that should be focused upon prior to deployment.[38] Next, units have developed their own training methodologies and identified non-standard resources to provide both individual and collective training on unfamiliar security force assistance tasks. As previously discussed, units have enlisted the services of local and federal police forces, military police and civil affairs units, and academia. BCT-S leadership has emphasized language, cultural, and Iraqi security force education targeting those within their brigades most likely to engage Iraqi forces. Deploying brigades have also significantly leveraged the 162nd Infantry Brigade and have used the training unit as an

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assemblage of security force assistance training knowledge.[39] These methods and

resources have been utilized by units whose leadership have conducted the necessary

analysis of their upcoming missions, identified the individual and collective tasks that will

be executed in theater, and have used inventive training methods to ensure their

soldiers are prepared for this atypical mission.

Because there is a lack of institutional guidance to assist deploying BCT-S

formations, FORSCOM, in conjunction with TRADOC and CENTCOM, should first

develop a list of standard security force assistance training requirements and allow the

brigade commanders the latitude to tailor their training as their projected mission

requires. Next, FORSCOM and TRADOC should establish a menu of training

resources that brigades can select from and coordinate for as they develop their

premission training plan. The collection of resources could include low-density military

schooling with military police, civil affairs, and language training assets, state

department and other governmental agency resources and training opportunities, and a

list of programs, contractors, and academics which can assist with host-nation cultural,

societal, and security force education. Finally, the Army should consider directing the

162nd Infantry Brigade as the proponent for capturing all BCT-S premission "best

practices".   This would place the responsibility for the collection of BCT-S lessons

learned and TTPs on the institution most closely involved with security force assistance

training and doctrine ensuring a repository of information for deploying units.

Another issue the initial BCT-S units have faced preparing for deployment is the

late assignment of the Security-Transition Teams' field grade officers. Typically, a large

percentage of the officers arrive only 60 days prior to a BCT-S' deployment window

rather than the prescribed 180 days, and do not participate in some or all of the brigade's premission training.[40] Missed training includes the 162nd advisor training and partaking in the brigades' MRE.   An extreme case, 1st Brigade, 82nd Airborne Division, one of the first two security force assistance designated brigades, received none of its S-TT field grade officers prior to their April 09 MRE.[41] Other brigades, while still not receiving all of their allotted field grade officers in time for the majority of the premission training, have fared better. 2nd Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division had 15 of its 34 allotted field grade officers participate in the brigade's August 09 MRE at the National Training Center. [42] 3rd Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division executed its MRE with 43 of 48 of its S-TT field grade officers, the largest percentage of any of the initial BCT-S units.[43] While the Army's Human Resource Command (HRC) is improving its ability to assign field grade officers for the S-TT mission to the BCT-S formations, it must consistently assign officers to arrive at their new unit no later than 180 days prior to the unit's deployment. Assignment by this date ensures these officers in critical S-TT positions participate in the necessary security force assistance training, including the MRE, and are assimilated into the unit forming the cohesive teams essential for deployment.   To assist the BCT-S, FORSCOM should track and enforce the timely assignment of S-TT field grade officers to these units.

The BCT-S or a Dedicated Security Force Assistance Formation

There has been much written and debated in regard to how to resource Army security force assistance operations. This argument has intensified since the decision of the Army to leverage the modular force and utilize the brigade combat team as the base platform for security force assistance efforts in Iraq, and to a lesser extent, Afghanistan. Many military scholars, including LTC (Ret) John A. Nagl and Dr. Andrew

Krepinevich, have persuasively advocated for a permanent security force assistance force instead of directing brigade combat teams to alter their organization and training for a secondary mission.

There have been multiple recommendations for a permanent force ranging in size and structure.   A proposal for a large permanent force has been rendered by LTC (Ret) Nagl, a noted counterinsurgency theorist.   The proposal calls for a 20,000-man Advisor Corps to oversee the training and deployment of 750 25-man advisor teams organized into three 250-team divisions.[44] The combat advisor divisions would include advisor teams for division, brigade and battalion levels. This Advisor Corps would be the proponent for all advisor doctrine and training and establish continuity for its members and families. A more modest recommendation is posed by Mr. Michael D. Jason, in *Military Review*.   He proposes an advisor command consisting of three 240-man teams each capable of advising a division while the Army's 45 brigade combat teams would each create and maintain five 10-man advisor teams: one at the brigade and four at the battalion levels.[45] The brigade team members would function solely as advisors and would be assigned to the brigades by the Human Resources Command for this purpose only. This Advisor command, as the one proposed by Nagl and others, would exist to provide training, develop the doctrine, and act as the proponent for all advisor related issues. There are numerous other details to both proposals, and other proposals that rest in between the two discussed above. It is important to note that these concepts are well considered and feasible.

Those who argue for a permanent security force assistance formation typically stand on common ground. First, all highlight the importance of advising foreign security

forces and note how the Department of Defense has elevated the importance of this mission but have not committed, from their perspective, the resources required to address this crucial mission. For example, most cite the December 2006 FM 3-24 *Counterinsurgency*, which emphasized the role of U.S conventional force security force assistance support by stating "while FID has been traditionally the primary responsibility of the special operations forces (SOF), training foreign forces is now a core competency of regular and reserve units of all Services."[46] Proponents for a permanent force also cite the expected length of counterinsurgency operations as a justification for a dedicated security assistance force. Many political and military leaders have warned of many years of counterinsurgency efforts that will be required by U.S. forces. The repeated employment of U.S. combat advisors since the conclusion of World War II is also argued by many. Advisor operations in during the Greek Civil War, Korean War, and Vietnam War, in addition to peacetime advisory operations by conventional forces, are given as examples for supporting the creation of a permanent, professional advisory command to address security force assistance.

Opponents of a permanent security assistance force base their argument on the best use of conventional forces. First, most critics of an advisory command argue that a permanent force would cost the Army up to four brigade combat teams.[47] These same critics point to the flexibility and utility of the Army's modular force. They argue that the modular brigade combat team is easily tailored and is the perfect partner to bolster foreign security forces negating the need for an additional one-dimensional formation. Summarizing the current DOD senior leadership position on this argument, the Commandant of the Marine Corps has recently declared that permanent specialized

conventional troop formations are not an efficient use of forces, and that when necessary, conventional forces can be trained and deployed to conduct security force assistance.[48]

While the importance of security force assistance is no longer questioned, both sides of this debate provide persuasive arguments for the best course of action to address this important mission now, and for the foreseeable future. With the Army severely constrained by current mission requirements and initial successes reported by units performing the security force assistance mission in theater, the Army should continue to leverage the modular force for this significant mission. As BCT-S formations continue to deploy and return from security force assistance operations, the Army should continue to evaluate their operational effectiveness and monitor the effects on these formations' core competencies and ability to execute full spectrum operations. Time is needed to fully grasp the value of the BCT-S and whether or not the modular force is the answer to security force assistance requirements prior to establishing another permanent formation which will draw heavily on the Army's already limited resources.

Summary

The importance of stability operations, and in particular security force assistance, has been highlighted by the Army during the past few years of conducting operations in both Iraq and Afghanistan.   The Army has leveraged the modular force and created the BCT-S to spearhead security force assistance efforts in Iraq, assisting and training security forces there as the United States prepares to significantly reduce its footprint there. Even though the Army has not provided significant guidance and direction for the security force assistance mission, BCT-S commanders have embraced this mission and

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have used imaginative and unconventional methods to train and prepare their units for the advise and assist mission while maintaining their formations' ability to execute full-spectrum operations. The "Big Army", including HQs DA, FORSCOM, and TRADOC, must identify training resources, ensure S-TT personnel are assigned in a timely manner to deploying BCT-S units, and designate a center of excellence to develop doctrine and capture training and operational lessons learned and best practices. While proponents have composed a solid argument for a permanent force of security force specialists, the Brigade Combat Team – Stability has embraced the security force assistance mission and is providing excellent support to Iraqi Security Forces. As multiple brigades deploy and identify lessons learned, time should be given to assess sustained BCT-S operations prior to creating a one-dimensional formation.

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